

Patent Application from
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For

Golf Club & Ball Marking and Alignment Device

1. Field of the Invention

The field of the invention relates to a golf club and ball alignment system and, more particular, to a mechanical, self centering alignment system that marks golf clubs and golf balls including the use of personalized logos or other such marks.

2. Brief Description of Prior Art and Background of the Invention

The rules of golf state that a player is responsible for marking his ball. The disclosed novel system that embraces this rule and uses it for equipment identification while additionally helping a golfer align oneself during play. In golf, the key to a consistent ball flight path is to insure the club face is square to the target. To aid a golfer in squaring the clubface to the target, this novel marking device allows the player to put matching marks on both the ball and club head. After a person mark their equipment, a player then simply aligns the marks on the ball with the marks on the club insuring that the clubface is square to the ball and to the target. These matching marks on the club and ball now simplify the alignment process by visually changing the alignment points. Instead of trying to line up a round ball with an oval, round, or flat club face, any variety of indicia or markings may be placed on a ball and club head provide true alignment. A player may mark his ball and clubs with letters, symbols, pictures, or lines by using this alignment device. This novel system provides a rectangular surface with unlimited

marking capabilities that brings together and squares a golf ball and golf club face. A person when playing golf in the address position, normally sees and tries to hit a round ball with a club face that is round, oval, or flat. Using this system of marking a golf ball and golf club head, a player in the address position initially visualizes one long continuous rectangle that is formed by the marks when the ball and club head are together. In addition, when a player is going to strike a marked golf ball with a marked club head, a flat end of the rectangle on the club head is now used to strike a flat end of the rectangle on the ball squaring and aligning the entire process. Further, when a player addresses the marked golf ball and golf club, this aligning process automatically changes the player's body position and aligns the body toward the target. This body alignment occurs because the club shaft must be positioned correctly thus forcing the hands of the player to be slightly in front of the marked golf ball.

Golf, besides being a sport, is a hobby enjoyed by millions of people. Many people invest great sums of money in golf related equipment and peripherals including expensive clubs, balls, bags, gloves, and alike. When two players sport similar or exactly the same equipment, it is an advantage to having some kind of marking on such equipment to allow it to be identified and distinguish it from each other. In addition, such marking can give owners security in that their equipment can be easily identified and discourages theft.

There are a number of patents used to mark a golf ball such as U.S. Patent No. 5,878,659 (1999) Hatter, where a flexible template with alpha-numeric openings is described. Hatter, illustrates a method of marking a ball by wrapping the template around a ball, and then uses a pen to trace the template to place a number or letters on golf balls. Klimek, in U.S. Patent 6,209,452 (2001) also describes a golf ball marking template that

contains a number of embodiments that contain templates or shapes which wrap around a golf ball and then use a pen to mark a ball by tracing a shape. Still another golf ball marking template is described by Klimek in U.S. Patent No. 5,925,186 (1999) which involves a tray containing a number templates in order to make a shape on the surface of a golf ball. In U.S. Patent No. 6,453,807 (2002) Ramey; describes a golf ball marker that provides for a single line drawn on the surface of a ball for alignment. Although the above ball markers are novel for their intended purpose, they fail to provide a method to customize the golf balls in that the users must rely on the given templates provided.

Golf ball and golf club alignment combinations have been described in a number of patents where marks on a golf ball tend to align with marks on a golf club. In U.S. Patent No. 6,422,949 (2002) Byrne, et al. describes a golf ball and putter having lines on each that match with the intent to provide alignment. Other patents like U.S. Patent No. 6,062,986 (2000) Kalse; and U.S. Patent No. 6,471,599 (2002) Ford; describe golf putters and irons (respectively) that contain marking on various areas of the club surface to help provide alignment but nether include lines on the golf ball. In US Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0013539 (2003) Scott et al., teaches about alignment lines on a golf club and golf ball that match in shape to provide alignment. Scott et al., further talks about the blending of colors with golf ball rotation to identify to the golfer that a ball is rolling in the proper direction. While these patents provide methods of alignment of the golf ball and club, the users of these systems must purchase the specialized clubs and balls that contain the marking to benefit from their intended use. None of these alignment methods provide for marking previously owned golf clubs and balls. In U.S Patent Application Publication No.2009/0013538 (2003) Daniels; teaches a method of golf club alignment using a device to find the center of a golf club. While this method provides for

marking the center of a club with a marker, it is rather complex in that it involves the use of angles, rulers, and protractors to achieve this measure.

While all the above methods of ball markers, pre-marked golf balls and clubs, suggested alignment systems, and a club centering device are fine for their intended purposes, none of the patents teach about markings for security and equipment identification.

The present invention provides a method of marking golf balls and clubs for the purpose of personalizing their golf equipment, while providing alignment of the golf ball and club during play. The novel device employs a method to center the face of a golf club which is essentially self-centering. The herein described alignment system can be used on all clubs and golf balls so that the owner does not have to purchase new equipment. It is the intention of the described device not to be limited to specific lines or indicia, rather it provides alignment and identification areas to be filled with any type of marks. Some examples include company symbols or trademarks, personal signatures or initials, names, street address, or pictures. The described personalizing golf ball and club alignment system provides its users with many benefits that previous methods fail to include

3. Objectives and Advantages

It appears that this novel disclosed golf ball and club marking and alignment device has the ability to fulfill the needs of golfers by providing a method to identify their equipment and provide an alignment tool during play.

A principal objective of this marking and alignment system is to provide a method to find the center of the face of a golf club.

Another objective of this marking and alignment system is to have a device that is easy to use and is self-centering.

A further objective of this marking and alignment method is to eliminate complex methods of obtaining measurements that involve the use of external devices such as protractors and angle measuring tools.

Still another objective of this marking and alignment method is to provide a golfer with the ability to mark the center of the club face with a variety of markings including symbols, letters, numbers, lines, shapes, pictures, and trademarks for esthetic decorative proposes.

Another objective of this marking and alignment system is allow a golfer to mark golf balls with a variety of markings including symbols, letters, numbers, lines, shapes, pictures, and trademarks for alignment purposes.

Still another objective of this golf ball and club marking and alignment system is to provide personal identification markings for security reasons.

Yet another objective of this marking and alignment system is to provide a means to mark all type of golf clubs and balls that are newly purchased or are old and already owned by a golfer.

Brief Description of Drawings

These objectives along with a method of marking and aligning golf balls and clubs will become apparent with the following description and clarified with referral to drawings provided.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device.

FIG. 2 is a drawing of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device as taken in the direction of arrows 2-2 seen in Fig. 1

FIG. 3 is a top overall view of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device.

FIG. 4 is an overall view of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device with a club in the alignment position.

FIG. 5 is a topside view of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device with a club and ball in their alignment positions.

FIG. 6 is a close-up front view of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device showing the club face and golf ball in proper alignment positions.

FIG. 7 is a close view of the golf ball cover.

FIG. 8 is a view of the golf ball cover lifted with a golf ball in proper position for marking and alignment.

FIG. 9 is an example of a marked golf club and ball aligned using a registered Trademark.

FIG. 10 is an example of a marked golf club and ball aligned using lines of text such as a name and street address.

FIG. 11 is an example of a marked golf club and ball aligned using a registered Word-Mark.

FIG. 12 is an example of a marked golf club and ball aligned using lines.

FIG. 13 is an example of a marked golf club and ball aligned using a symbol or shape.

Reference Numerals in Drawings

10 Golf club and ball marking / alignment Body	12 golf ball cover
14 Golf club head well	16 golf club face centering marks
18 golf club shaft support arm	20 golf club shaft centering guide
22 golf club head centering band	24 centering band securing strap
26 golf club support guide right	28 golf club support guide left
30 opening in body	32 golf ball well
34 golf club head	36 golf club shaft
38 golf ball	40 golf ball cover marking window
42 golf ball cover hinge	44 golf ball cover handle
46 golf ball marking / alignment area	48 golf club marking / alignment area

Overall Description of Embodiment – Figs. 1 to 12

Referring to **FIG. 1**, a perspective overall view of the golf club and ball marking / alignment device body **10** which is preferably made of durable plastic or other moldable substance such as aluminum. Body **10** contains a well **14** that is shaped to accept and can accommodate the various sizes and shapes of golf club heads including drivers, irons, and putters. Golf ball cover **12** is attached to body **10** by using hinge **42** which allows golf ball cover **12** to be opened or closed using golf ball cover handle **44**. Also in **Fig. 1** is a view of the relationship of club head centering band **22** which is centered over golf club head well **14**. On the distal end of golf club head centering band **22**, a securing strap **24** is fed through openings **30** in body **10** to temporally affix the distal end of centering band **22** to body **10**. Golf club shaft support arm **18** in **Fig. 1** is attached to body **10** and slides along golf club support guide right **26** for right handed golf clubs while golf club support guide **28** is used for left handed golf clubs. Golf club support arm **18** has an adjustment screw **50** which allows golf club shaft centering guide **20** to be raised or lowered to accommodate different size golf clubs. The top front edge of body **10** has alignment markings **16** that are used to center the face of a golf club.

FIG. 2 is a drawing of golf club and ball marking /alignment device having been divided along lines 2-2 in **Fig. 1**. Note body **10** has golf club well **14**, golf ball well **32**, and openings **30** within. Golf ball well **32** has golf ball cover **12** in closed position, golf club head centering band **22** with centering band securing strap **24** is over golf club well **14**. Front end of body **10** has golf club face centering marks **16** on top surface. Golf club support arm **18** is mounted on golf club support guide right **26** for right handed golf clubs.

FIG. 3, is a top overall view of golf club and ball marking / alignment body **10** again illustrating the relationship of its main components. Note that golf ball cover **12** in the open position exposing golf ball well **32**. Golf ball cover **12** has a golf ball marking window **40** that can be seen here in **Fig. 3**. Directing attention to golf club head well **14**, in this view note that the front wall of golf club head well **14** is shaped to form an arc. Also note that golf club head centering band **22** traverses the center of golf club well **14** which terminates and attaches to body **10** using securing band **24**. Golf club shaft support arm **18** with golf club shaft support **20** is presently affixed to right golf club support guide **26** and is in position to support a right handed golf club. Golf club shaft support arm **18** along with golf club shaft support **20** can be move and affixed to left golf club support guide **28** when it is necessary to support a left handed golf club. Golf club face centering marks **16** on body **10** are visualized and span the entire width of the front end of golf club well **14**.

Directing ones attention to **FIG. 4**, observe that golf club and ball marking / alignment device body **10** now has a golf club head **34** placed within golf club head well **14**. **Fig. 4** illustrates the linear alignment relationship between the center of golf club well **14**, the center of the golf club face centering marks **16**, golf club head centering strap **22**, and golf ball cover **12** in closed position. Note that golf club shaft support arm **18** and golf club shaft centering guide **20** holds golf club shaft **36** at a level which allows the bottom surface of golf club head **34** to be centered and level within golf club head well **14**. The proper height of golf club shaft support arm **18** is achieved using golf club

support arm adjustment screw **50** while alignment is found by sliding golf club shaft support arm **18** forward and backward on golf club support guide right **26**.

FIG. 5 illustrates an overall side view of golf club and ball marking / alignment device body **10** and the relationship of a golf club head **34** placed within golf club head well **14**. Golf club head centering band **22** is placed over golf club head **34** and securing band **24** is attached to body **10**. **Fig. 5** demonstrates golf ball cover **12** open exposing a golf ball **38** placed with golf ball well **32**.

FIG. 6 is a close-up view of the relationship and alignment of golf club head **34**, golf club face centering marks **16**, golf club head centering band **22** as it is draped and positioned over golf club head **34**. Golf club head centering band **22** provides a central channel for marking golf club head **34**. With golf club head centering band **22** in place, the center of the face of golf club head **34** is can be determined using golf club face centering marks **16**. **Fig. 6** illustrates that golf club head centering band **22** also secures golf club head **34** within golf club well **14**. In this position, alignment of golf club head **34**, golf ball **38** and golf ball alignment / marking area **46** are easily visualized.

FIG. 7 is a close-up view of golf ball cover **12** noting golf ball cover handle **44**, golf ball cover marking window **40** in the center of golf ball cover **12**. Golf ball cover hinge **42** provides a means of attachment of golf ball cover **12** to golf club and ball marking / alignment device body **10**.

FIG. 8 shows the positional relationship of golf ball cover **12** now in the open position, and it's attachment to body **10** along with golf ball **38** placed within golf ball well **32**.

FIGS. 9, 10, 11, 12, & 13; are examples of different types of marking that can be made using this novel device which provide identification, security, and alignment of golf club head **34** and golf ball **34**. All of the examples have been marked using the novel golf club and ball marking / alignment device **10** and its related components. The resultants provided by this golf club and ball marking / alignment device yields a variety of easy to see indicia within the provided golf ball marking / alignment area **46** and golf club marking / alignment area **48**.

Operation – FIGS. 1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5, 6, 7, 8

Marking and Aligning a Golf Club

Figs. 1 – 5: An operator of golf club and ball marking / alignment device **10** begins by lifting golf club head centering band **22** upward and back toward the front face of body **10** thereby exposing golf club head well **14**. Golf club head well **14**, is constructed as a self centering well **14** due to the curvature of the front face of golf club head well **14**. This curvature forms an arc which is best viewed in **Fig. 3**. Once a golf club head **34** (**Figs.4 & 5**) is placed within golf club head well **14**, golf club head centering band **22** is then moved and positioned back over golf club head **34** and anchored to body **10** through securing strap **24** (**Figs 3 & 5**) . Centering guide securing band **24** is fed through openings **30** in body **10** which serves to keep golf club head centering band **22** aligned straight and secured to body **10**. In **Fig. 3**, golf club head

centering band **22** and centering guide securing band **24** is depicted traversing the exact center of golf club well **14** in the fastened position.

Figs. 2, is a cross sectional view dividing body **10** at its midline and is taken at lines **2-2** in **Fig. 1**. Golf club well **14** is constructed wide enough to accommodate all clubs including drivers, irons, and putters. Golf club well **14** depth is such that when a club head **34** is placed with golf club well **14** (**Fig. 4**) the face or striking surface of a golf club head is exposed allowing for measurement. Golf ball well **32** (**Fig. 2**) is of sufficient size and depth to allow for approximately one half of a standard golf ball to be placed within.

Figs. 4 & 5. With a golf club head **34** placed within golf club head well **14**, golf club head centering band **22** courses over the top of golf club head **34**. Golf club head centering band **22** terminates by having centering guide securing band **24** course through openings **30** in body **10**. Securing band **24** is then fixed to body **10** using an attachment means such a Velcro® strap. The center of golf club head **34** can now be found by using golf club face centering marks **16**. These centering marks **16** are found on the top surface of body **10** just in front of golf club head well **14**. The curvature of golf club well **14** which forms an arc, self aligns the face of golf club head **34** as golf club head centering band **22** is tightened. Although golf club head **34** appears as centered, some minor adjustment may be necessary. Golf club face centering marks **16** are used to make fine adjustments. The operator needs only to slightly slide golf club head **34** left or right while looking the face of golf club head **34** (**FIG. 6**). The operator should count an equal number of golf club face centering marks **16** on each side of the center point within golf club head band **22**. This finds the exact center of the face golf club head **34**. **Fig. 4,**

golf club shaft **36** rests on the upper end of golf club shaft support arm **18** which has a golf club shaft centering guide **20** at its top end. The height of golf club shaft support arm **18** is adjustable for the different type of clubs by loosening golf club support arm adjusting screw **50** and sliding support arm **18** up or down. Raising or lowering golf club shaft **36** allows for insuring the bottom surface of golf club head **34** is level within golf club well **14**. Continuing with **Fig. 4**, golf club shaft support arm **18**, also slides front to back of body **10** along golf club support guide **26** for right handed clubs. To provide support for left handed clubs, one will place golf club shaft support arm **18** on golf club support guide **28** and adjust accordingly.

Having found the center of the face (**Fig. 6**) of golf club head **34**, an operator may now place a label, marking or other such indicia on golf club head **34** within the two bands of golf club head centering band **22**. Some examples of golf club markings **48** placed within the two bands of golf club head centering band **22** can be seen in **Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13**.

Marking and Aligning a Golf Ball

To place identification marks and provide alignment marks on a golf ball, one begins by directing attention to **Figs. 4-8**. Golf ball cover **12** viewed in **Fig. 4** in the closed position. In order to gain access to golf ball well **32**, golf ball cover handle **44** is lifted and moves golf ball cover **12** its open position. **Figs. 7 & 8** are a close-up views of golf ball cover **12** along with its related components golf ball cover handle **44** and golf ball cover hinge **42**. Golf ball cover handle **44** provides a means to lift and open golf ball cover **12** while hinge **42** is a means of attachment for golf ball cover **12** to body **10**. Golf

ball marking window 40, is an opening in golf ball cover 12 that allows access to the surface of a golf ball 38 when placed below the golf ball cover 12 in the closed position.

In Fig. 8, a golf ball 38 is placed in golf ball well 32 while golf ball cover 12 is open.

Golf ball cover 12 is then closed only exposing the surface of golf ball 38 which is below the golf ball marking window 40 (Fig. 4). This exposed surface of golf ball 38 below golf ball marking window 40 can now be marked in many ways including ink, labels, marks, words, stickers, symbols, or other such indicia. Golf ball marking window 40 is equally as wide as the central part of golf club head centering band 22.

Combining a marked golf club and golf ball for alignment. Figs. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

After marking golf club head 34 and golf ball 38, a golfer may now utilize these markings for a number of purposes. A first example is the use of a Trademark such as the one in Fig. 9, (a registered Trademark of Motorola Inc. USA). Here this Trademark serves to provide identification of both golf club 34 and golf ball 38. Further this Trademark also provides alignment for the person who is playing golf. Golf ball marking/ alignment area 46 and golf club marking / alignment area 48, give the center of the club face and the center of the golf ball using this golf ball and golf club marking and alignment device 10. Such marks may be placed on any clubs both new and old. Other marks such as the example shown in Fig. 10 further illustrate the ability to mark golf balls and clubs for security purposes. Fig. 10 has golf club head 34 with the owners name and address in small print affixed. When playing golf and standing in a position to hit a golf

ball, golf club marking / alignment area **48** appears to have straight lines. This appearance of straight lines is due to the distance between the eyes of the golfer and the club on the ground. Golf ball **38** in **Fig. 10** has lines of print with small letters. Such writing serves to identify the owner, gives added security of golf ball **38** and other marked equipment. These same marking also provides alignment between golf club **34** and golf ball **38** while playing golf.

Fig. 11 has an example of a company name or a registered Service-Mark (Microsoft is a registered Trademark and Service-Mark of the Microsoft Corporation, USA), which provides identification and security marks for a golfer and acts as an alignment tool for golf club head **34** and golf ball **38**. **Fig. 12** is an example of some straight lines on a label which are place within golf club head centering band **22** which provides a golf club marking / alignment area **48** on golf club head **34**. These same lines are place on golf ball **38**. The combination of both marks on golf club head **34** and golf ball **38** provides the owner of the golf equipment with both identification of equipment, (security) and alignment during play. **Fig. 13** is still another example of marking that provide identification of equipment (security) and ball and club alignment during play. This example uses a geometric symbol place in golf ball marking / alignment area **46** on golf ball **38** and golf club marking / alignment area **48** on golf club head **34**.

Summary and Scope

After reading the fore stated description of the novel golf ball and golf club marking / alignment device **10** it becomes apparent that this invention provides a novel method of finding the center of the face of a golf club head **34** and a system for marking this same golf club head **34**. This same device provides for also marking a golf ball **38** on its surface. The combination of marking a golf club head **34** and a golf ball **38** provides its user with a number of additional benefits including:

- The ability to provide a simple method of identifying a person's golf equipment.
- The unlimited type markings to be placed on both a golf club head **34** and golf ball **38** including pictures, Trademarks, Service Marks, symbols, words, lines and more.
- A self centering golf club head well **14**.
- A novel device that can be use on both new and used equipment
- Markings may be place on all type and sizes of golf clubs including drivers, putters, irons and wedges.
- The device can be used to mark and center on both right handed and left handed golf club heads.
- Custom markings on a golf ball **38** and a golf club head **34** act as a security device in that such marking will discourage theft including a persons name and address.

Finally, the describe golf club and ball marking / alignment device provides a method of placing marks on a golf club head **34** and golf ball **38** that serves as an alignment tool for its user while playing golf. The rules of the game of golf allows for the marking of golf club heads **34** and golf balls **38**. These same rules allow for ball placement in a number of situations during play such as while putting on a green and placing a ball on a golf tee. This ability to pickup and position a golf ball **38** allows for the alignment of both a golf club head **34** and a golf ball **38** with a golf tee. Such alignment will allow for more accurate drives and putts.

The above description shall not be construed as limiting in ways which this invention may be practiced but shall be inclusive of many other variations by those skilled in the art whose changes or modification could be made without departing from the broad interest, intent, and true spirit of this invention.